

BRABOURNE PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of a Meeting of the Parish Council
Held at 7.00pm on Monday 16th November 2015
At Brabourne Village Hall

1. Present

Cllr Hickmott (Chairman), Cllr Mrs Bewick, Cllr Mrs Tanner, Cllr Mrs Young, Cllrs Joules and Mayland, and Mrs Wood (Clerk). Cllr Howard (ward member) and Mr Graham Kingston (Community Warden) were present, six members of the public attended.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Spokes (prior commitment) and Cllr Jane Martin (ward member).

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4. Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 21st September 2015 be approved and confirmed as a true record.

5. Matters Arising

5.1 Roads and Footways

5.1.1 Smeeth crossroads. KCC Highways have refused the request that bollards be installed. Parking by HGVs overnight continues to be a problem, Smeeth Parish Council is pressing for action.

5.1.2 The resurfacing request for Manor Pound Lane near the junction with Canterbury Road has again been refused, this will be raised with the Highways Steward during his meeting with the Council.

5.1.3 The signpost at the Weekes Lane/Pilgrims Way junction has been knocked over, this was reported to KCC Highways but not yet repaired despite a repeated request. The Clerk to follow-up.

5.1.4 Some of the potholes in Coomb Lane have been repaired, but others remain, the Clerk to follow-up.

5.2 Local Needs Housing (LNH) On hold pending the outcome of the Local Plan review. Cllr Howard advised that Giles Holloway will be consulting again on the proposal at Calland; Cllr Howard stated that he is seeking to preserve as much of the green space as possible.

5.3 Community Led Plan (CLP) and Emergency Plan The Emergency Plan will be updated, with the agreement of the working group, it will then be forwarded to ABC to be uploaded on to the new template.

Community Led Plan:

Enhanced Facilities for the Young: The group is fundraising and working with the Improved Sporting Facilities group. A Halloween party raised £150, the target is £2000. To achieve all aims of the Plan £70,000 will have to be raised.

Tidy up the Village: Tesco has funded cleaning equipment; the Gardening Society has offered to help with planting.

Footpaths: See item 12.3.

Local Needs Housing: On hold pending the outcome of the review of the Local Plan. Concerns had been expressed regarding the extension of the 'Right to Buy' to Housing Association tenants; a letter has been received from the English Rural Housing Association advising that a voluntary agreement has been reached between the government and National Housing Federation (the housing associations' trade body) - the existing statutory exclusion from the Right to Buy of English Rural's properties will continue.

5.4 Provision of dog waste bags The cost of supply and distribution has led to the discontinuation of free provision by ABC, although some stocks are remaining - Cllr Miss Martin had offered to deliver them to Smeeth Parish Council. 30,000 bags had been given out annually by John Childs Garage; storage of bags commercially sourced would be needed. It was noted that bags provided by Sellindge Parish Council are stored in the Parish Council's office; Brabourne Parish Council does not have an office, storage in the

village hall was suggested. Samples of bags of varying thickness were circulated, it was agreed that the economy bags would be provided.

6. Reports from Community Warden and PCSO

Mr Kingston reported that there had been no reported incidents at Halloween or on Bonfire Night. A dog had been stolen from a pound near the Deer Park. A Landrover had been stolen from Woolpack Hill. Complaints had been received about noise on the green arising from noise and mopeds being ridden at speed, Mr Kingston is monitoring. Complaints have been made about wheelie bins not being removed from the footway after they have been emptied, these will be followed up. There was an alleged assault at the Plough Inn – ball-bearings were catapulted at the tenant; the offenders are not thought to be local and are on the shop's CCTV, they were driving a white Fiat 500 with red and white chequers on the side.

7. Village caretaker scheme

The meeting was suspended to allow Michael Hinchliffe (Smeeth Parish Council) to address the Council.

Mr Hinchliffe reported that a series of meetings had been held to discuss the scheme. Information on costs and funding had been circulated. The caretaker will work for 30 hrs/week in the winter and 40 hrs/week in the summer. The contract is for 3 years.

Pay scale: should this be paid at the National Minimum Wage (£6.70, due to rise to £7.20 on 1st April 2016), the Living Wage (£7.85) or £9.10 (as paid to the Wittersham caretaker

The rate paid would impact on the cost of the scheme, but including running and capital costs would be approx £24,000 per year (total £72,000). ABC will give a grant of £5000 per year for running costs and £5000 for start-up costs In the first year, KCC will give £2000 per parish per year (total £44,000). Services already provided by the Parish Councils which would be included in the scheme currently cost approx £5000 per year (total £15,000). The shortfall of £13,000 (£72,000 - £44,000 - £15,000) would have to be funded by the Parish Councils. Should this be paid pro rata by the number of households or divided equally between the parishes? Whichever is agreed, the cost to the average (Band D) household would be less than £5 pa.

Brook and Smeeth Parish Councils have agreed to adopt the scheme and pay the caretaker £9.10/hr, the acknowledged shortfall being met by an increase in the Precept.

A meeting is to be held with ABC on 24th November to discuss funding.

Capital expenditure: ABC is giving up to £10,000 and KCC up to £5000.

If the scheme is adopted it was suggested that the Wittersham model be used, with a 'go live' date of 6th April 2016.

Concerns were expressed as to the possibility of finding the right candidate, citing the problems experienced by Aldington and Wittersham Parish Councils. It was noted that guidelines are now in place and references would be sought.

Cllr Mayland welcomed the scheme because it would give the Parish Council control of services; but asked if the Councils would be able to withdraw from the scheme if they failed to appoint a suitable candidate. Cllr Mrs Tanner agreed – would the services be taken back by ABC? Cllr Hinchliffe replied that this would be raised at the meeting on 24th November with ABC.

It is unknown what will happen at the end of the 3-year contract, after which ABC and KCC could withdraw funding. Mr Hinchliffe noted that responsibility would revert to whoever owns the land. A Business Plan would be needed for year 4 onwards for funding the scheme.

It was noted that Mersham is Mersham with Sevington, but residents in Sevington would not benefit from the scheme, therefore mitigating measures will be put in place for Sevington by Mersham PC..

In answer to a question from Cllr Howard, if the scheme is funded by an increase in the Precept this would be a 'one-off', it would not be further raised by the same amount year-on-year.

Storage of equipment would be in ABC-owned lock-ups in the parishes, but with additional security.

Holiday entitlement has not yet been decided; the Wittersham caretaker is allowed no more than 2 continuous weeks in the summer, some of the smaller tasks are carried out by residents during this period.

The meeting was reconvened and Mr Hinchliffe thanked for his presentation.

The Chairman proposed that the scheme be adopted.

Resolved:

That Brabourne Parish Council adopts the village caretaker scheme, subject to recruitment of the right candidate.

The Chairman proposed that the caretaker be paid at a rate of £9.10/hour.

Resolved:

That the caretaker be paid at a rate of £9.10/hour.

The Chairman proposed that the Precept be increased pro rata by the number of households to meet the shortfall in funding for the scheme.

Resolved:

That the Precept be increased pro rata by the number of households to meet the shortfall in funding for the scheme.

8. Financial Report

8.1 To agree payments in accordance with the Budget

Resolved:

That the following payments be agreed in accordance with the Budget.

Payments

Details	£
South East Water (allotments)	129.78
S Wood (gross salary October)	500.28
S Wood (gross salary November)	500.28
S Wood (expenses)	17.99
M Hickmott (expenses)	39.15
D Ansley (salary) (6hrs @ £6.50hr/18 hrs @ £6.70/hr)	159.60
Blean Tree Care	660.00
Getmapping plc	33.60
Harmer & Sons Ltd	480.00
Westwell Parish Council (Clerk's training)	15.62
Smeeth and Brabourne Football Club	300.00
St Mary's Church	250.00
S Wood (Fordred's Charity)	175.00
Shepherd Neame Ltd (allotment rental)	400.00

Receipts

Details	£
Lloyds Bank interest	1.26
VAT refund	181.20
Precept	7250.00
Concurrent Functions Grant	355.00
Council Tax Support Grant	130.00
Fordred's Charity	175.00

Balance £ 27547.72 (cheque and deposit account)

£ 668.00 (No. 2 account for CLP and EP group)

8.2 To consider an increased allowance to the Clerk for superfast broadband

The Chairman reported that the Clerk has switched to superfast broadband and proposed that ¼ of the additional cost incurred be met by the Parish Council, if paid pro rata it would be £3/month. This was agreed and will be paid half-yearly with the use of home and computer allowance.

Resolved:

That the Parish Council will pay an additional £3/month to the Clerk for provision of superfast broadband, this to be paid half-yearly.

8.3 To consider the draft Budget for 2016-20

The draft Budget was circulated. The Chairman proposed that the Precept be increased to £17,000 to meet the cost of the caretaker scheme. Cllr Mayland recommended that the decision be taken at the January meeting, when more information will be known regarding the scheme. The figures for the Concurrent Functions Grant and Council Tax Support Grant to be paid to the Parish Council will also have been published.

9. Planning Committee report

Planning applications received

The Chairman of the Planning Committee reported that the following applications have been approved: Church Farmhouse, The Street; Clougy House, Canterbury Road.

Comments have been submitted on the following applications:

15/01122/AS & 15/01123/AS Five Bells, The Street. Concerns were expressed that there were inaccuracies in the application; it is a repeat application; parking issues on the road, bend and triangle. Cllr Howard advised that the application has been made because the previously-granted permission is about to expire. The officer is minded to approve because it is the same application as that approved.

15/00959/AS Parsonage Farm, The Street No objections were made to the application but repairs are needed where the dropped kerb has been put in.

15/01258/AS Missingham Farm, Pilgrims Way An objection was made to the application given concerns about increased traffic on a single track road with no passing places and poor visibility. Cllr Howard asked if these concerns related to the holiday lets, office, workshop or storage? The Chairman replied that it was to all; there is little existing traffic, the site having only been used for the keeping of horses for a number of years, contrary to an assertion in the application.

The following planning applications have been received:

15/01328/AS Woodlands, Hampton Lane It was proposed that no objection be made to the application.

Resolved:

That no objection be made to the application.

15/01443/AS Little Foord, Bulltown Lane It was proposed that no objection be made to the application.

Resolved:

That no objection be made to the application.

The Alders, Weekes Lane is with Planning Enforcement.

10. Report from KALC representative

The Committee met on 16th September and discussed Motions for the Annual General Meeting.

The next meeting is on 18th November, but the presentation on J10A has been postponed because of delays in the consultation process.

11. Allotments project

Plot renewals are due at the end of the year, there will be no increase in plot fees. The rental paid to Shepherd Neame by the Parish Council will increase to £500. The project should be revenue neutral, therefore any surplus would be offered to the Allotment Society for capital expenditure.

12. Village green at The Warren

12.1 Request from the CLP group for permission to replace and relocate the existing bench on the green

One bench has been removed and there is another by the bus stop. Mr HInchcliffe advised that he was a Coordinator but had not been informed of the request. It was recommended that any proposals should come from the CLP Coordinators' group so all groups are aware, noting that any expenditure would have to be approved by the coordinators. The Clerk will reply to the request with an invitation to the next meeting.

12.2 Rules for use of the green There are no byelaws in place for the green, and permission would have to be given by the Secretary of State before any could be introduced. The Clerk is to ascertain if any protection is conferred by its status as a village green. It was reported that it is already an offence to drive on land without the landowner's permission, and that nothing must be done that would damage the surface.

12.3 Community Led Plan – footpath to the side of the Warren

The meeting was suspended to allow Ian Ruck (Community Led Plan) to address the Council.

Mr Ruck put forward a proposal that a footpath be put in along the green parallel with the Bridge Road hedgerow, which would extend to the footpath in Lees Road in front of 1-4 The Warren and to the bus stop (to include hardstanding at the stop). Plans had been drawn up and a similar scheme in Mersham inspected but found to be unsuitable because of the materials used and maintenance issues. The CLP group's preferred option is a path to the KCC specification: 1.5m wide with concrete edging, crushed stone but topped with coarse tarmac and fine tarmac overlaid. It would be 3m away from the hedgerow because of the slope up to the hedge, and to allow for mowing and hedge cutting. Mr Ruck suggested that residents pay for memorial seats to be placed near the path. Estimates for the path including a spur to the noticeboard are awaited. The PROW office is supportive of the initiative, and has suggested that Barbourne Parish Council adopts the path as a PROW, its maintenance would then devolve to KCC. If not it would remain a 'permissive' footpath and maintenance would remain with the Parish Council.

Highways has refused the request for hardstanding at the bus stop because it would be on Parish Council-owned land; Mr Ruck has asked for the criteria used when other bus stops were upgraded.

Comments were invited on the proposals, but not all councillors had received them when circulated electronically.

The Parish Council was asked if, as part of the project, the gaps in the hedge should be planted; it was suggested that one be left to allow residents to access Bridge Road, and a spur added from the footpath.

Concerns were expressed that the lack of kerbing in Bridge Road and the resulting water run-off on to the green may adversely affect the footpath. The Clerk is to repeat the request for kerbing, emphasising that the green is now owned by the Parish Council and is flooding with water run-off from Bridge Road.

Cllr Mayland suggested that the footpath's surface be made from shredded, recycled tyres, laid to mimic bark; he felt that this would be more in keeping with the area and may be less expensive. Mr Ruck agreed to follow this up, stating that there is a need for a long-lasting, low maintenance material.

Mr Ruck advised that the CLP group will be applying for grants and seeking donations. Mr Hinchliffe stated that 3 quotes will be obtained by the group and taken to the Coordinators' group.

The Chairman asked if the Parish Council could assist by applying for grants, Cllr Howard counselled that more funding sources are open to the CLP group than to the Parish Council.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ruck for arranging for the visibility shrouding of the electricity pole on the green, noting that a wayleave should be in place; the Clerk has written to UK Power Networks informing them of the change of ownership and asking that the wayleave transfers to the Parish Council.

The Parish Council's permission was not sought when a telephone pole was erected on the green, this is being followed-up by KCC on the Parish Council's behalf.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ruck for his presentation and efforts.

13. Ashford Local Plan – village protection strategy

Aldington Parish Council, in conjunction with other parishes, is drawing up a policy to prevent unwanted development before the necessary infrastructure is in place. Peter Brett Associates (PBA) have been engaged by the Council to advise on data needed to support this policy, at a cost of £5500 which will be part-funded by grants. Data will be generated by surveys, these will be carried out by residents and a report prepared by PBA. The resulting policy will be taken to the Borough Council for adoption. Cllr Howard stated that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is in place so new developments support infrastructure, he acknowledged that the CIL is not always passed on to Parish Councils.

Cllr Joules asked how such a policy would influence the Borough Council, Cllr Howard replied that if adopted it would be part of the Local Plan. Cllr Maylands stated that he understood Aldington's concerns because of the impact on the parish of significant developments, but no developments are proposed for Brabourne. Cllr Howard noted that although no sites have been put forward in Brabourne as part of the

review of the Local Plan, sites could still be proposed in the period remaining to the end of the review and the examination of the draft Plan by the Inspectorate.

Mr Hincliffe is to have an exploratory meeting with PBA on behalf of Smeeth Parish Council; the date will be circulated and a representative from Brabourne Parish Council invited to attend.

14. Correspondence

The Royal British Legion Brabourne & Smeeth Branch re Restoration of Smeeth War Memorial. The Legion has written to Smeeth Parish Council asking for help with regard to the restoration, which will cost £1373 + VAT. The Legion's rules prevent it from taking charge of the work because of the memorial's status as a public memorial on KCC-owned land; the Legion's funds have to be spent on supporting its charitable needs. Brabourne Parish Council was asked to consider a contribution, it was noted that Brabourne has its own Memorial in Brabourne Church. It was suggested that the restoration could be included as part of the 'Smartening-up the Village' aim of the CLP. Smeeth Parish Council is applying for grants for the works, and it was suggested that an application be made for a Heritage grant.

15. Open Session

The meeting was suspended to allow members of the public present to raise matters of concern with the Council.

Mr Willis stated that cars are parking over the dropped kerb at Manse Field. The Chairman stated that this is a ticketable offence. The suggestion had been made that yellow warning lines or a white 'bone' be put in, but this has not yet been effected. The Clerk to follow-up.

The Parish Council was asked to define the role of the village caretaker. The Job Description has not yet been agreed but tasks to be undertaken would include grass and hedge cutting (on public land), clearing gulleys, litter picking, emptying bins and cleaning street signs. The litter pickers currently employed by Brabourne and Smeeth Parish Councils concentrate on the 'conurbation'; the Council was asked to extend this to outlying rural lanes, which are heavily littered, when the caretaker scheme is implemented.

The meeting was reconvened.

16. Any Other Business

16.1 Cllr Joules reported the theft of his Gator utility vehicle, stolen 2 weeks ago and not recovered.

16.2 Cllr Howard advised that he now has a website, and will post information on community events: saxonsore.yourcllr.com The Clerk will put a link from the community website.

16.3 Fence enclosing the verge in Bulltown Lane: this has been reported to Highways, who are to request that the fence be moved back.

16.4 Remembrance Sunday service This was moved to Smeeth Church because of works to the floor at St Mary Brabourne. The wreath was laid jointly by the Chairmen of Brabourne and Smeeth Parish Councils, after an invitation from Brabourne to Smeeth.

16.5 Newspaper collection Fewer than 50% of residents recycled their paper via the Scouts and Guides collection, however this increased significantly after a flyer was delivered to households.

16.6 Kent Fire & Rescue Service Information Update: parish fire hydrant maps The Clerk advised that repeated requests had failed to elicit the promised map. A loose slab by a hydrant in Bridge Road was reported.

17. Resolution to exclude the public

Resolved:

Under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, because of the confidential nature of the business to be dealt with, the Public and Press leave the meeting during discussion of item 17, namely Distribution of Fordred's Charity payments.

Resolved:

That Cllr Mrs Bewick distributes the payments as agreed.

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Monday, 18th January 2016 at 7.00pm in Brabourne Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm.